

## D. L. Serventy Medal 2013: Citation

### EMERITUS PROFESSOR RON WOOLLER

*The D. L. Serventy Medal is an award of the Royal Australasian Ornithologists Union (now BirdLife Australia) that honours members who have made outstanding contributions to publication in the science of ornithology in the Australasian region.*

With more than 40 years' experience in the field of conservation biology and ecology, Ron Wooller stands at the forefront Australian ornithology, especially in Western Australia.

After gaining his tertiary education at the Universities of York and Durham, where he took the opportunity to study the breeding ecology of Kittiwakes, Ron became a lecturer at the University of London Colleges, but within a few years opportunities beckoned farther afield.

After emigrating to Australia in 1976 to take up the position of Lecturer in Biology at Murdoch University in Perth, the focus of his studies readily shifted from Kittiwakes to the Silver Gulls that breed on Carnac Island, a few kilometres offshore from Perth. This gradually led to an interest in other colonial-nesting coastal birds, including terns and noddies, and seabirds, especially the Short-tailed Shearwaters and Little Penguins that also breed on offshore islands.

However, despite this fascination with birds of the coasts and oceans, after settling in Western Australia he quickly became captivated by the unique forests and woodlands of the South West, and commenced examining the feeding ecology of their populations of small passerines, particularly honeyeaters, as well as the associated aspects of pollination of the characteristic vegetation of the region. (It also led to studies of similar aspects of the diminutive Honey Possum.)

After more than 40 years, his volume of work has culminated in a prodigious collection of peer-reviewed publications – 135 at last count – with most concerning Australian birds, including 20 published in *Emu*. To illustrate the value of his publications, his top five seabird papers have amassed over 300 citations – a major achievement indeed. Not content with publications alone, however, Ron has delivered papers at dozens of international



conferences throughout Australasia and around the world, many of them as an invited speaker. He also encourages others to publish their findings, regularly providing assistance by editing and reviewing their papers, imparting sage advice.

His two disparate streams of ornithological study – small woodland and forest birds and seabirds – have dominated Ron's professional life, and this is reflected in most of the topics investigated by the numerous honours and postgraduate students whose studies he has supervised. Many of his protégés are now well-known and respected names in Australian ornithology in their own right. It is his infectious enthusiasm to inspire others that leads his peers in the fields of ornithology and conservation biology to hold Ron in such high esteem.

Ron's record in ornithology speaks for itself – he is a most worthy recipient of the 2013 D. L. Serventy Medal.

*John Peter*